

WAS APPEARED
PAGE 18.

WASHINGTON POST
15 April 1986

JACK ANDERSON and JOSEPH SPEAR

U.S. Cables Tell of Past Qaddafi Plots

Until very recently, the Reagan administration offered no hard evidence to back up its charges that Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi is responsible for much of the random terrorism that has made Americans nervous about traveling abroad. Now the White House and the State Department are giving the public chapter and verse on Qaddafi's involvement.

Lest anyone get the idea that the latest outrages laid at Qaddafi's door are his only offenses—and may be a justifiable response to his Gulf of Sidra humiliation—we can now disclose some of the past evidence against Qaddafi found in State Department files. The cables from U.S. embassies to Foggy Bottom were recently declassified.

The cables, reviewed by our associate Lucette Lagnado, make clear Qaddafi's willingness—nay, eagerness—to finance terrorism and subversion virtually anywhere in the world. Here are some examples of his mischief-making:

■ **Nigeria.** In April 1983, the American ambassador in Lagos sent Washington a detailed report on an alleged plot to overthrow the Nigerian government. The plot was "personally approved" by Qaddafi and bankrolled by him to the tune of \$40 million.

A Nigerian on trial for plotting the overthrow "had testified of several clandestine trips to Libya . . . last year, and said he and seven other plotters had received cash payments of over \$1 million in Tripoli, Accra and Lagos," the cable stated. The ambassador added that the supposed plot might have been a scam "in which several Nigerians were able to con large sums out of the Libyans."

Con men or coup plotters, the Nigerian group "met with Qaddafi at a military farm on the outskirts of Tripoli," the ambassador reported. The Libyan leader "approved and encouraged their scheme, telling the Nigerians that he had two other groups in Nigeria, but they were ineffective." The next day, the visitors met with members of the Libyan revolutionary council and were given money.

■ **Egypt.** In November 1984, Egyptian intelligence held Qaddafi up to worldwide ridicule by announcing—falsely—that a Libyan opposition leader had been assassinated in Cairo. Qaddafi immediately claimed credit, whereupon the Egyptians produced the supposed victim at a news conference, alive and well. The Libyan hit squad assigned to the task had been captured by the Egyptians and persuaded to confess.

The Cairo embassy reported to Foggy Bottom that the gang that couldn't shoot straight confessed, among other things, that Qaddafi also had plans "to assassinate various heads of state, including [West German] Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, the United Arab Emirates' Sheik Zayed bin Sultan and Pakistan President Zia ul-Haq."

■ **Tunisia.** When Qaddafi complained about a supposed plot by Palestinians in Tunis to assassinate Libyans working abroad, the U.S. ambassador in Tunisia reported that the charge might be "a response in kind to the Tunisian public statement implying Libyan responsibility for the sabotage of the Algerian-Tunisian pipeline."